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U.S. Embassy's Security Probed

Spy Charges Against Guards in Moscow Prompt Review

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The Reagan administration has begun a "high-level and hardball reevaluation" of security procedures at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow that could lead to substantial changes in methods used to protect all American embassies located in East Bloc countries, State Department sources said yesterday.

The reevaluation, prompted by the discovery of apparently serious security breaches by two Marine guards at the Moscow embassy, could lead to the State Department taking over partial responsibility for security of diplomatic missions there and a much tighter selection process for Marines sent to protect the embassies, according to these sources.

U.S. investigators are trying to determine whether the two Marine guards, Cpl. Arnold Bracy and Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, acting separately or together, allowed Soviet intelligence agents access to the embassy chancery building at night.

As a result of the guards' arrests, U.S. officials are considering the possibility that the two Marines, rather than CIA defector Edward L. Howard, provided the Soviets with some of the information about U.S. intelligence operations in Moscow that enabled the Soviets to seriously impair U.S. information-gathering there.

Howard, trained for Central Intelligence Agency service in Moscow but dismissed as a security risk by the agency, escaped Federal Bureau of Investigation surveillance at his home in Sante Fe, N.M., in September 1985 and fled the country. He later turned up in Moscow where he now lives.

Marine Corps spokesman Lt. Col. John Shotwell said yesterday that it was "a logical assumption" the two accused Marine guards stood duty together at various times during the eight months their assignments overlapped in Moscow.

"If the Soviets gained access to the most sensitive areas of the embassy for any period of time, then the ramifications of that are very wide," said a congressional intelligence source. "Obviously, it's serious."

The Marine Corps brought five additional charges against Lonetree late Wednesday, The Associated Press reported yesterday, bringing to 19 the number of counts pending against the former embassy guard.

The arrests of the two guards follows a series of security problems at the U.S. Embassy in the Soviet capital, including the launching of another full-scale investigation of the unfinished chancery there. U.S. security officials fear the building is riddled with listening devices implanted by the Soviet builders and may not be usable without extensive examination and repairs.

The Senate intelligence committee has been planning its own investigation and a series of hearings in late April on the security and construction problems bedeviling the Moscow mission. Committee spokesman David Holliday said yesterday the latest revelations made the hearings "a pretty urgent matter."

Congressional sources said that, since late 1985, the committee had issued repeated warnings about the security situation in Moscow, after a Soviet-implanted antenna was found in the embassy chimney and typewriters were discovered to have been bugged. "People in the State Department simply ignored the warning," one source said.

During a trip to Moscow in December 1985 staff members of the Senate intelligence committee interviewed Marines stationed at the embassy and found they were "very bitter" about the way they were being treated by the State Department, the source said.

State Department spokesman Charles E. Redman said that U.S. security agencies had begun a "single coordinated investigation" into "every aspect" of the latest security breakdown at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

"That includes the Marine guards, the way classified information is handled [and] physical security of the embassy in Moscow," he said. "The logical conclusion of all that is that if improvements can be made in any of these areas, we'll be making them."

Other sources said there was a distinct possibility that, in the future, State Department security officers would be assigned alongside Marine guards to share responsibility for embassy security. But they said this was still a delicate subject because of Marine Corps sensitivity to the implication that its guards could no longer be trusted.

State Department officials said yesterday the investigation was now focused on how much damage was done by the two arrested Marine guards, Bracy and Lonetree, who served together in Moscow from July 1985 to March 1986.

Lonetree was taken into custody in late December and Bracy earlier this week. Their arrests mark the first time a Marine guard has been implicated in espionage anywhere since the Corps began guarding embassies in 1948.

The two guards are reported to have had affairs with Soviet women working at the embassy, and are suspected of having given Soviet KBG agents details of the chancery floor plans and office assignments as well as the names and pictures of U.S. intelligence agents stationed in Moscow.

The arrest of the two Marines has raised the issue of how guards are chosen and trained for duty in East Bloc countries. All guards undergo a six- to eight-week course for duty abroad. Those chosen for duty in communist countries are given additional training, which emphasizes "a very strict no-fraternization policy," according to Shotwell. This means the guards are forbidden to have any social contacts, particularly with foreign nationals working at U.S. embassies.

Lonetree is reported to have had an affair with a Soviet translator working at the U.S. Embassy and Bracy with the embassy cook. Neither relationship was reported to superior officers.

Lonetree's affair was discovered by accident when he made a comment about it to another embassy person in Vienna, where he was reassigned after his Moscow tour ended in March 1986.

Bracy was arrested following an investigation into a rowdy party held by the Moscow Marine contingent that led to administrative charges against five of the participants.

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